



Røde NT6

Unlike Victorian children, good mics sometimes need to be heard, but not seen – and the new NT6 promises high fidelity in hard-to-reach places. Huw Price hits the Røde.

KEY FEATURES

- Cardioid, pressure-gradient 1/2-inch gold-sputtered capsule
- 2-position variable pad: 0dB and -10dB
- 2-position variable high-pass filter: flat and 80Hz
- Phantom power: 44–52V
- Recommended load impedance: 1kΩ and above
- Frequency range: 40Hz–20kHz
- Output impedance: 200Ω

NT6

Manufacturer **Røde**
 Price **£230**
 Contact **HBB 020 8962 5000**
 Web **www.rote.com.au**

Røde made its name delivering affordable, large-capsule condenser microphones to the rapidly expanding home studio market of the early 1990s. These days, Røde can arguably count itself as one of the big boys and its product range

Naturally enough – since it's also a true condenser rather than an electret microphone – it's also intended for recording studio applications, which is great news for anyone who has struggled to squeeze chunky microphones into a tight spot.

The technology isn't entirely new because the NT6 relies on the same tried-and-tested 1/2-inch cardioid capsule that Røde uses in the NT5. A conventional mic clip is supplied for the preamp along with a dedicated mini clip for the capsule. There are also two thread adaptors (1/4-inch to 5/8-inch and 1/4-inch to 3/8-inch) to

RØDE HAS CREATED A FINE-SOUNDING MICROPHONE THAT CAN GET YOU INTO THE TIGHTEST OF SPOTS.

has expanded to include shotgun and live microphones. Naturally, the company also produces small-capsule microphones and the NT6 is a particularly interesting and unusual product that's designed for a wide variety of applications.

Off with its head!

Røde has separated the capsule housing from the body of the microphone that contains the transformerless preamp. The two are joined together by a three-metre length of Kevlar-reinforced cable terminated at each end by a cute mini-XLR connector. This makes the whole assembly very compact, so it's well suited for unobtrusive sound reinforcement duties in TV studios, on stages and on a podium for conference or presentation work.

attach the capsule assembly to a wide variety of mic stands, tripods and boom poles.

Anyone who has used Røde microphones will be familiar with the high-quality satin nickel finish and that trademark gold dot. There are also two switches that provide 10dB attenuation and bass rolloff at 80Hz.

Neutral, but nice

Since the NT6 is intended for vocal applications, we started testing with a spoken-word session. First impressions are that the NT6 sounds very neutral and transparent. Consonant definition is extremely good and those 'esses' and 'tees' come over cleanly, but without any apparent sibilance. The cardioid pattern is tight, with strong rear rejection and an off-axis response that drops in volume quite quickly.

Measuring Up

If Røde develops a few more capsules for the NT6 it will have created an affordable modular system that could compete with AKG's Blue Line, with the SE300B preamp (£155) and variously patterned CK capsules (£155 each). Sennheiser has a system, too, with its K6P preamp (£216) and various capsules.

Moving to acoustic guitar produced some very impressive results. This microphone has plenty of top-end airiness, but it doesn't sound at all harsh. What's more, it goes very deep, but retains the tautness and definition of the wound strings even in dropped tunings. Most vocal and musical action takes place in the midrange, and this is where a lot of modern mics are let down through excessive colouration. Fortunately, the NT6 retains its even and neutral response throughout the frequency range.

Of course, when you're bashing away on a plywood pig of an acoustic guitar with the musical tonality of an adenoidal walrus, a neutral-sounding microphone can be a mixed blessing. It won't do many favours for a poor vocalist either, but there are plenty of large-capsule condensers that are better suited for the job. Small-capsule microphones should be about integrity rather than flattery anyway.

It's a shame that the connections on the preamp and the capsule are both female. If one had been male, the capsule and the body could have been joined together when required and used as a conventional pencil mic. In every other respect, though, the NT6 performs well. Compared to an Oktava MC012, output is noticeably lower and the sound isn't as warm, but we found the freshness and airy brightness of the NT6 better suited to a wider variety of recording applications. **MTM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Smooth, neutral sound
- Fine build quality
- Ideal for restricted spaces
- Unobtrusive
- Attenuation pad
- Bass rolloff

WALK ON BY

- Capsule and body can't be joined
- Slightly low output
- Cardioid only

VERDICT

By separating the capsule from the preamp, Røde has created a fine-sounding microphone that can get you into – as well as out of – the tightest of spots.



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